

63. W. G.

24 Palmyra Prov

No.
13

Ingenious - but requires
further proof of the truth of
the theory advanced -

Typed March 15th

1825

Inaugural Dissertation

on Hemorrhoids;

For the degree of M.D.

By Robert Mendenhall Huston, of Penna.

Apr. 1862
1862

1862

1862

1862

1
From the days of Hippocrates to the present, every Author who has pretended to enumerate the diseases of the human frame has included that usually denominated Haemorrhoids; and, during that whole space, notwithstanding it has passed under the review of such an host of writers, little will be hazarded in saying that scarcely anything has been added to the previously attained knowledge of the causes, diagnosis, or treatment of this most disagreeable and perplexing complaint.

Considering the diagnostic signs by which the disease may be known as sufficiently established, and having neither time nor inclination to write again what has been written many times before, I shall omit for the present any thing on that head, and proceed at once to the position which I shall endeavour to establish - viz - That Haemorrhoids depends generally on functional derangement of the liver.

If this suggestion be correct, it will alter essentially our method of treatment in such cases; and that it is, I think will be rendered sufficiently probable by a consideration of the habits and diseases of those persons who are mostly affected with it, the local causes which operate in the sections of country in which the disease more

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the
the eleventh is the fact that the
the twelfth is the fact that the
the thirteenth is the fact that the
the fourteenth is the fact that the
the fifteenth is the fact that the
the sixteenth is the fact that the
the seventeenth is the fact that the
the eighteenth is the fact that the
the nineteenth is the fact that the
the twentieth is the fact that the
the twenty-first is the fact that the
the twenty-second is the fact that the
the twenty-third is the fact that the
the twenty-fourth is the fact that the
the twenty-fifth is the fact that the
the twenty-sixth is the fact that the
the twenty-seventh is the fact that the
the twenty-eighth is the fact that the
the twenty-ninth is the fact that the
the thirtieth is the fact that the
the thirty-first is the fact that the
the thirty-second is the fact that the
the thirty-third is the fact that the
the thirty-fourth is the fact that the
the thirty-fifth is the fact that the
the thirty-sixth is the fact that the
the thirty-seventh is the fact that the
the thirty-eighth is the fact that the
the thirty-ninth is the fact that the
the fortieth is the fact that the
the forty-first is the fact that the
the forty-second is the fact that the
the forty-third is the fact that the
the forty-fourth is the fact that the
the forty-fifth is the fact that the
the forty-sixth is the fact that the
the forty-seventh is the fact that the
the forty-eighth is the fact that the
the forty-ninth is the fact that the
the fiftieth is the fact that the
the fifty-first is the fact that the
the fifty-second is the fact that the
the fifty-third is the fact that the
the fifty-fourth is the fact that the
the fifty-fifth is the fact that the
the fifty-sixth is the fact that the
the fifty-seventh is the fact that the
the fifty-eighth is the fact that the
the fifty-ninth is the fact that the
the sixtieth is the fact that the
the sixty-first is the fact that the
the sixty-second is the fact that the
the sixty-third is the fact that the
the sixty-fourth is the fact that the
the sixty-fifth is the fact that the
the sixty-sixth is the fact that the
the sixty-seventh is the fact that the
the sixty-eighth is the fact that the
the sixty-ninth is the fact that the
the seventieth is the fact that the
the seventy-first is the fact that the
the seventy-second is the fact that the
the seventy-third is the fact that the
the seventy-fourth is the fact that the
the seventy-fifth is the fact that the
the seventy-sixth is the fact that the
the seventy-seventh is the fact that the
the seventy-eighth is the fact that the
the seventy-ninth is the fact that the
the eightieth is the fact that the
the eighty-first is the fact that the
the eighty-second is the fact that the
the eighty-third is the fact that the
the eighty-fourth is the fact that the
the eighty-fifth is the fact that the
the eighty-sixth is the fact that the
the eighty-seventh is the fact that the
the eighty-eighth is the fact that the
the eighty-ninth is the fact that the
the ninetieth is the fact that the
the ninety-first is the fact that the
the ninety-second is the fact that the
the ninety-third is the fact that the
the ninety-fourth is the fact that the
the ninety-fifth is the fact that the
the ninety-sixth is the fact that the
the ninety-seventh is the fact that the
the ninety-eighth is the fact that the
the ninety-ninth is the fact that the
the hundredth is the fact that the

generally prevails, and lastly, the success of a treatment ground
on this supposition. —

Of the habits and diseases of those most obnoxious to it.

The sedentary course of life has ever been considered as strongly inclining
to the production of this malady: And those who are so circumstanced
will not un frequently be found to labour under some of the forms of
melancholia, together with its concomitants, visceral obstruction, mostly
of the liver, dyspepsia with flatulence, constipation &c. And, ultimately,
haemorrhoidal symptoms. —

If we reflect for a moment we shall be convinced from our every day
experience of the vast utility of exercise in promoting the performance
of all the vital functions of the body, and especially the circulation
of the blood. If for instance a part of the body as an arm or a leg, be
restrained in its muscular motions, no matter how simple and
unproductive of violence the cause may be, it will nevertheless
soon be perceived to have lost its usual vigour; the muscles will be-
come almost paralyzed, the nervous sensibility of the part will be
diminished, and the plainest proofs of a weakness or retarded circula-
tion will be manifest. (Does the diminution muscular energy and nervous sensibility
in this case, as Bichat and others suppose, result from the stoppage of influence of retained venous blood?)

1840

My dear friend,

I have just received your letter of the 10th inst. and am
glad to hear from you. I am well and hope these few lines
will find you the same. I have been thinking much of late
of the friends of the cause and of the progress of the
work. I have been thinking of the many who are
laboring for the truth and of the many who are
suffering for the cause. I have been thinking of the
many who are giving up all for the truth and of the
many who are giving up all for the cause. I have been
thinking of the many who are giving up all for the truth
and of the many who are giving up all for the cause.

Whatever may be the immediate cause of so great a reduction of the vitality of a part to the whole of the body under the circumstances mentioned, shall for my present purpose consider it as resulting from diminished circulation in the parts so affected, owing to the want of a proper degree of excitement, to stimulate the vessels to a full performance of their functions. —

In those cases in which the general habit suffers from this cause, we soon observe its effects in parts remote from the centre of life, and where the circulation is most languid, as the extremities, especially the inferior: — And, by analogy, I should suppose the liver to be early affected in these cases, from the slow circulation of blood through its parenchyma, and the low degree of vitality which it seems at all times to possess: And this supposition gains probability from the torpor observable in the alimentary canal under such circumstances. — If the impaired state of digestion be not owing to a deficiency of biliary liquor, to what cause is it attributable? — As, according to the notions of those physiologists who assert that "digestion is most active during sleep," it should be increased rather than diminished during the more than usually quiescent state of the whole body.

But a much stronger argument in favour of the early suffering of the liver in persons of a sedentary habit, may be found in the great

may be said to be uncommon, "he was very frequently consulted in cases of hemorrhoids." From his nephew, the present Dr James Hilt, I learned at the same time that he had for many years suffered from "bleeding piles," which nothing removed until relieved for a suppurative affection of the liver, since which he has felt nothing of either complaint. —

From Dr. Wilson, Roberts & Marsh, who reside in the upper & hilly parts of Bel Co Penn^a, I learn that hemorrhoids is of very rare occurrence; while the Physician who resides along the lower part of the same County and immediately in the vicinity of the Delaware Marshes, where intermittent & remittent fevers return as regularly as the Autumn, are as uniformly & frequently consulted for hemorrhoids as Rheumatism or Pleurisy. —

In the almshouse of Bel Co Penn^a, the Patients labouring under hemorrhoids during three years were regularly interrogated as to their ever having laboured under intermitting or remittent fevers: & a great majority of cases they had suffered from one or the other of those forms of fever at some period of their lives, and not a few had either at the time or at some time anteriorly, decided symptoms of either an acute or sub-acute affection of the liver or spleen.



The facts which have been detailed are strikingly conclusive, and are susceptible of the most satisfactory proofs; and when it is recollected how few were the sources from which they could be derived by a student, their purity will scarcely be objected to, nor will their importance be lessened by the want of support from writers when it is borne in mind that the suggestion is entirely new — And if after a more ample investigation it shall be established as a fact that hæmorrhoids do prevail more generally in marshy than hilly districts of Country, of which I have not the slightest doubt, the conclusion will be irresistible that its dependence is upon visceral obstruction; And from the close connection, existing between the intestinal canal and the liver (and the Vena Porta and hæmorrhoidal veins) we shall be directed most unequivocally to a derangement of that organ as the cause of the complaint.

The facts stated are further strengthened by the view which has been already taken of the great liability of the liver to become diseased in persons of a sedentary habit; and that a want of due action in that organ is alone sufficient for the production of the disease under consideration, will be rendered



Still more probably by a moments reflection upon its functions and influence on the alimentary canal. —

It is known to be the chief if not the only organ concerned in the secretion of bile, and that the proper digestion of the food depends much upon the due quantity and quality of that fluid.

Whether the bile when mixed with the mature alimentum exerts a chemical influence upon it, so as to produce a separation of the nutritious from the excrementitious parts, if it is not necessary now to inquire; but that by its presence in the duodenum it stimulates by its active properties the parietes of that intestine to a more vigorous action, and that its combination with the excrementitious parts of the alimentary matter renders it more stimulating to the lower intestines, so as to induce a greater contraction upon their contents and so forward its expulsion, are facts universally admitted, and are quite sufficient for my present purpose. — Hence we learn the important part which healthy bile performs in promoting the peristaltic motion, and from thence may readily infer that a change in its properties or deficiency in its quantity would be followed by a sluggish discharge of the excrement, a permanent mechanical



influence upon the veins of the Rectum would be the consequence, and ultimately the existence of hamorrhoidal tumours result of necessity. But the greater probability is that in derangements of the liver where a torpid state is induced, that a like torpor is produced in the intestines and their veins from the nearly imparts existing, independantly of the want of stimulus from bile, and hence the hamorrhoidal affection would result from functional disease of the liver in a two fold way. — That it ever occurs, at least as a permanent affection, from mere mechanical pressure by the faeces, unassisted by other predisposing causes, is extremely doubtful; or that it is occasioned by pregnancy where no other predisposing cause exists, is I think not less so. Nor do I believe in the production of the complaint by stimulating medicines as all kinds when applied to the coats of the intestines, unless so long continued as to induce a debility of the parts, or, under other circumstances than the latter, the pain and smarting would be found to be nothing more than a temporary affection — An increased excitement of the parts, instead of

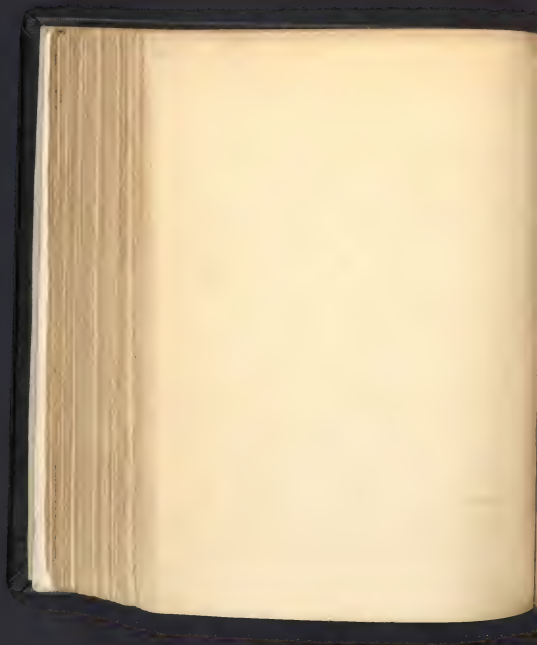


diminished action as in genuine hemorrhoids.

It now remains to notice the effects of a treatment grounded on the supposed hepatic origin of the disease.

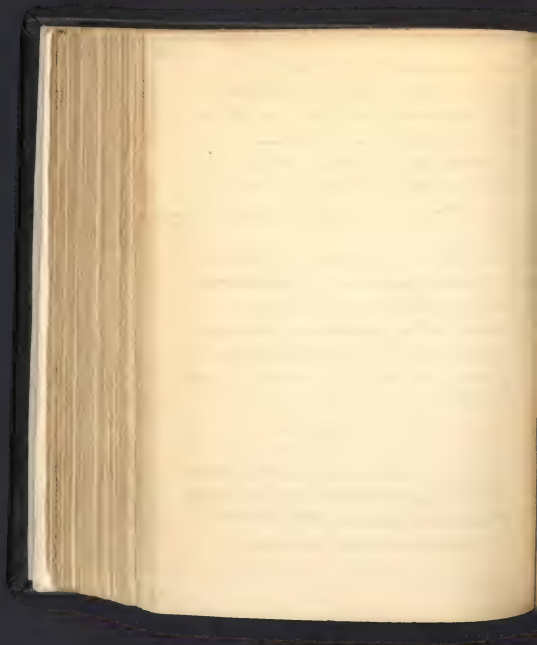
We have already noticed the influence of mercury in curing both the hepatic & hamorrhoidal affections of Dr. Wilson. In a number of cases treated, some with mercury and others with the mineral acids, particularly the nitric, in the Almshouse of Del. Co. Penn. in the years 1818-19-20, the most convincing proofs were exhibited of its efficacy. In several long standing cases no other indications of biliary obstruction were discoverable than a slight discolouration of skin, sluggishness of the bowels with depression of mind, or occasional slow fever, and to which I would add the existence of hamorrhoids.

By a diligent use of mercury or the acids for some time so as to produce an attenuative effect upon the system, every case was relieved, and several permanently cured. In some whose hepatic symptoms were more strongly marked, frictions with the acids over the region of the liver or the ap-



16
Application of a mercurial plaster, appeared to have a very happy effect as auxiliaries in the cases. In two instances, one of which had a warty excrescence, and the other one or two small fistulous openings through which a slight discharge issued, the ordinary treatment by caustic was also used in addition to the foregoing means.

After what has been already said on the practical effect of a treatment grounded on the position which I have advocated, little remains to be said in conclusion. Mercury had in every case a more decided influence than the acids, altho' they were found useful adjuvants, especially in the concluding stage of the treatment when a tonic influence was wished to be produced. The Mercury was never used to the extent of producing much Hyalism, and the Blue-pill was found Superior to every other preparation. The ordinary treatment was often used ~~salutary~~ ^{salutary}, though not in every case — that is, the bowels were opened by oil where the Mercury was not sufficient



in the commencement, which it always was after the few first days of its administration — Astringents or emolient poultices were applied to the tumours when they seemed to indicate a necessity for either, and in every instance rest was enjoined. But that the cures effected were not owing to these palliative means, well, I apprehend, be readily admitted by every practitioner who has had a reasonable share of such cases to treat. —

j



